Winter 1998 ◆ Number 14

The Women's Quarterly

You're in Trouble Again, Johnny

Jessica Gavora on the White House's latest attempt to punish boys

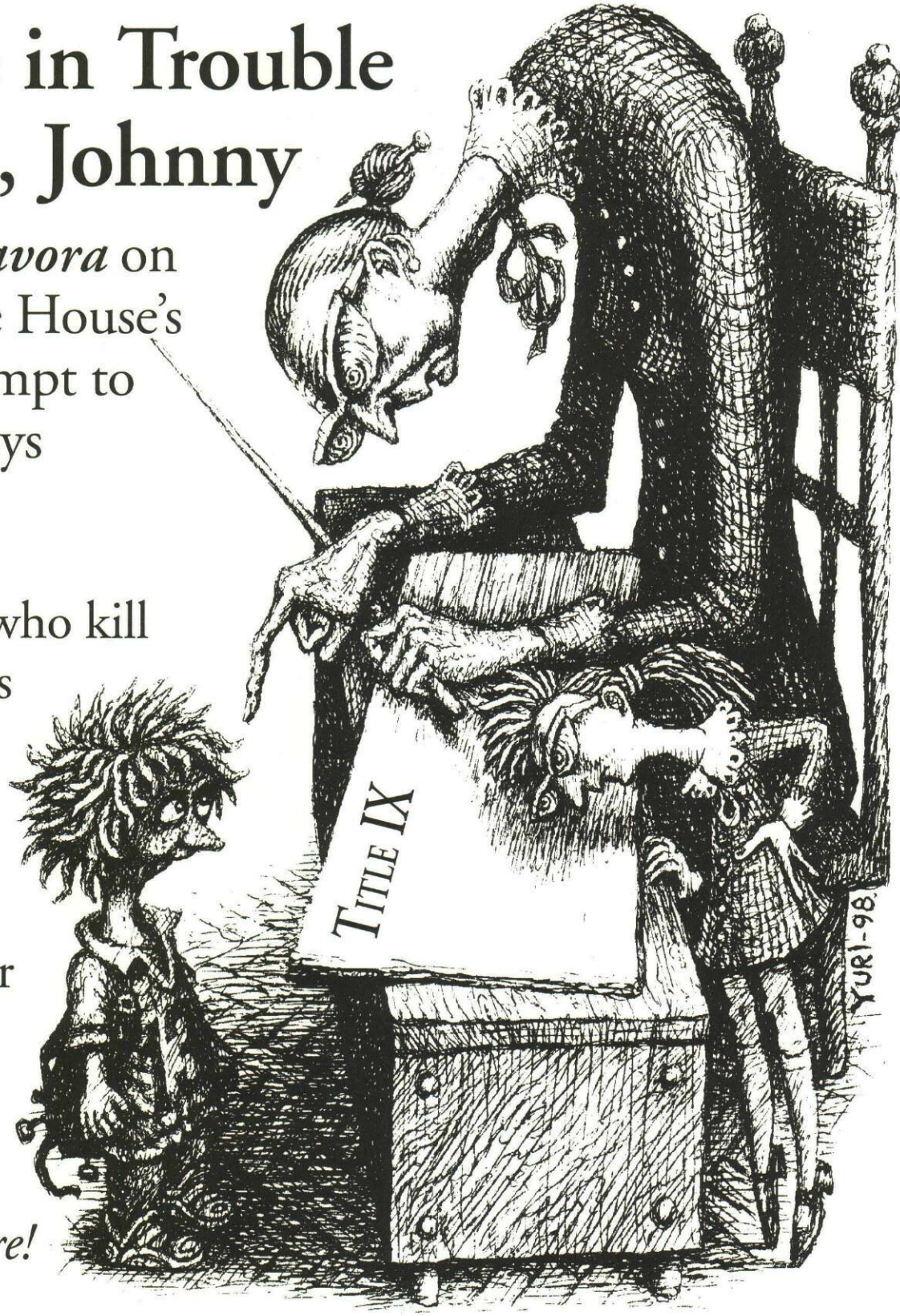
Also…

Nice girls who kill their babies

Family holidays from hell

Ruth Bader Ginsburg's youthful follies

…and more!



Yuri Kobyadenko

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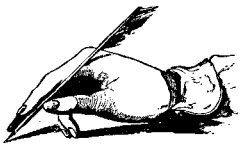
Diary



Who ya gonna call?

SOMETIMES YOU DON'T realize how truly dangerous a theory is until you are confronted with it in practice. Recently I've had two rather harrowing encounters with our local emergency services—the fire and police departments. Both incidents left me wondering afterwards how many lives are being put at risk in order to promote more female fire fighters and cops.

The first time was a few months ago, when my dishwasher caught on fire. Black smoke billowed impressively from its insides. My little fire extinguisher, kept on hand for such an event, did not work. Within minutes we heard the sound of sirens approaching. I flung open the front door and saw a man who, at first glance, appeared to be eight feet tall and, with his gear and yellow coat, about four feet wide. His neck was the width of a hydrant. "This way," I said, as he pushed past me.

Striding down our hallway, his heavy axes and tools swinging back and forth off his sides, he made our whole house suddenly feel doll-size. I fretted his head might bash the light fixtures. I thought, boy, if my house goes up in flames, this is the man I want carrying me out of it—along with my husband, two children, cat, dog, and possibly a few armchairs as well, all effortlessly tossed over his left shoulder. My little son, evacuated outside with the pets, thrilled at the arrival of three more mighty firetrucks.

The fireman, meanwhile, glanced at the smoke pouring out of my dishwasher, which only moments before had seemed so scary and engulfing, and made an unimpressed remark into his walkie talkie (to the effect of, "You can wind the pumps back up boys. Don't bother with the axes, etc."). I thought he was going to put out the fire by spitting on it. Instead he took out a pocket extinguisher and blew the thing out in about two seconds. "Look," he said pointing to a melted cup lid stuck in the motor. "That's what did it."

"Oh."

"You might need a new one."

"Cup?"

"No. Dishwasher."

And indeed I did. Fortunately, it was the only thing we needed.

"Thanks a lot."

"Uh huh."

The other incident involved two policewomen. They'd responded to an alarm at my mother's house while she was away. The security company called me to unlock the front door. The officers had found an open window at the back of the house and were concerned that an intruder could still be inside.

I sized up the officer, and she sized up me: We were both pretty frail as body types go. An intruder—even an unarmed, beer-bellied intruder—would make short work of us both. Her female companion bravely suggested that she would wait in the patrol car in case they needed to radio for more help. All in all, the situation seemed like some bad, made-for-TV movie.

"I'm going in," she said finally, her hand reaching for her holster as she entered the house. This was not reassuring. I waited outside, nervously listening for shots or screams. She returned after a few minutes, looking extremely relieved. Perhaps the wind had blown open the window. No sign of intruders. We locked the house back up.

BUT WHAT IF there *had* been an intruder? As a woman, you are made to realize the importance of sheer physical presence. Men know this, whether they are facing down some mouthy jerk in a bar or confronting a burglar in the hallway at night. A gun is an equalizer it's true, but it shouldn't be necessary in all situations. How much more quickly will a female police officer reach for her pistol? Or shoot at the first hint of trouble?

For the sake of making women more "equal" in professions that require brute strength, advocates blind themselves to the true victims of inequality—those of us whose lives may depend upon affirmative-action hires. So what, they say. Or as Gloria Steinem once memorably put it, to ABC reporter John Stossel: It is actually *preferable* for fire victims to be dragged—bumpity bump!—from burning buildings rather than be carried because "the air is better closer to the floor."

Thanks, but in any future life-threatening situations, I'll opt for Arnold Schwarzenegger over Meryl Streep.

~ Danielle Crittenden

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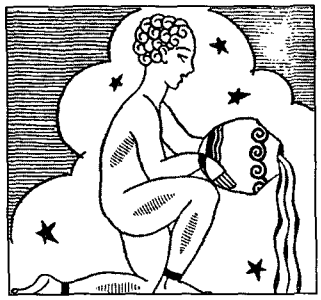

Danielle Crittenden
Editor

Grace Paine Terzian
Publisher

Mitzi Hamilton
Art Director

Rhonda K. Mohrmann
Editorial Assistant

2111 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 550, Arlington, Virginia
22201-3057

Tel.: 703/243-8989
Toll Free Line: 800/224-6000
Fax: 703/243-9230
E-mail: iwf@iwf.org
Website: www.iwf.org

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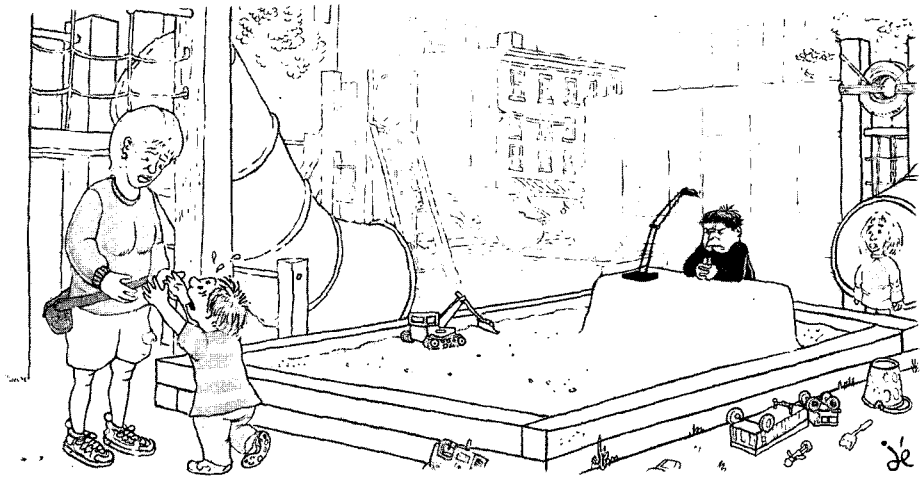

"Mommy! Billy keeps downsizing me!"

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You're in Trouble Again, Johnny

Not satisfied with squashing boys' teams across the country, the Clinton administration is getting ready to impose quotas on every other aspect of education, reports *Jessica Gavora*

Say, here's a thought: Why doesn't the federal government regulate the number of boys permitted to take biochemistry in every university in the country? Crazy? Not according to President Clinton, whose administration is already at work drafting rules that would give it just that power.

For once, the administration is remarkably candid about what it is up to. In most areas of law, the Clinton administration makes a point of denying that it favors quotas while in fact insisting upon them. But in the realm of education, Clinton has given the country fair notice of what he intends to do: police the number of women and the number of men enrolled in every academic program in the country. The regulations to do it are being drafted by the Department of Justice at this very moment.

The tool the president intends to use is Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Until now, the law has been used to ban sex discrimination in college athletics. But last June, at a White House ceremony honoring the twenty-fifth anniversary of the addition of Title IX to the act, Clinton announced a dramatic new initiative. He told his audience of educators, athletes, and women's groups that he believed Title IX's reach should be extended beyond sports. It should be broadened to bring about "gender equity" in every academic program that in any way benefits from federal aid—that is, virtually all of them. "Every school and every education program that receives federal assistance in the entire country must understand that complying

Drawings by Yuri Kolyadenko

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with Title IX is not optional. It is the law and the law must be enforced," said Clinton. "We are not stepping up our enforcement of Title IX," seconded an administration official. "We are *beginning* it."

The transformation of Title IX from a guarantee of equal opportunity into an excuse for quotas is a relatively new thing. It can be traced to a series of federal court rulings in an anti-discrimination lawsuit brought against Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. In the early 1970s, Brown set to work to build an exemplary women's athletic program. But in 1991, it unexpectedly found itself in a budget crunch. To trim costs, it downgraded two women's teams and two men's teams from varsity status (that is, university-funded) to club (unfunded) status. The female athletes sued. They complained that while the Brown student population was fifty-one percent female, the university's athlete population was only thirty-eight percent female. This, they asserted in *Brown* v. *Cohen*, was evidence of discrimination under Title IX. A federal district court and then a federal appeals court agreed.

Under the *Brown* decision, if a college's student body is fifty-two percent female, fifty-two percent of its varsity athletes must be female, too. If not enough girls sign up, then boys must be sent home. Last year, the Supreme Court refused to review the decision, leaving it as law. Quotas had moved from the admissions office to the gridiron and the gym.

Alas, women simply don't turn out for competitive sports at the same rate as men. As a result, schools are increasingly forced to make their male-female participation rates more equal not by adding women, but by subtracting men. Colleges across the country have been forced to shut down hundreds of male sports, including the Olympic-training programs that produced gold-medal winners in diving and swimming (see accompanying article). Last fall, Boston University ended its ninety-year-old football program, reducing the number of male athletes on campus by sixty-three and thereby achieving "gender equity" without adding a single new female athlete. At National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions in the past five years, the number of men playing sports has declined by ten percent.

And this is where we are *before*—to quote that Clinton aide—the administration begins to enforce Title IX in the classroom as well. As University of Chicago law professor Richard Epstein warned during the *Brown* trial, if such an interpretation of the law were adopted by the government, "Title IX would be read to require a rough proportion of men and women in engineering and science on the one hand, and art and literature on the other, even though most certainly far more men are engaged in the former activities, and far more women students are engaged in the latter."

Until now, the federal agency entrusted with enforcing Title IX has been the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). And the person in charge of that office is one of the most zealous advocates of sex and race quotas in the entire administration, Norma Cantu. Cantu is the person most responsible for using Title IX to bring quotas to sports, and the force behind pushing them further to academics. In 1993, FairTest, an anti-standardized testing advocacy group, filed a Title IX complaint with Cantu's office alleging sex bias in the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT). The problem, according to FairTest, was that too few of the 15,000 National Merit Scholarship finalists selected by the PSAT were girls. Although around fifty-five percent of the test takers each year are female, young women make up only about forty percent of National Merit Scholarship finalists.

Cantu agreed with FairTest that this disparity indicated bias. And because the College Board, which administers the PSAT, receives federal funds, Cantu's views carried the day. Under threat of losing government money, the College Board settled. Although it refused to concede that the PSAT was biased, the College Board agreed to add a thirty-nine-question, multiple-choice test of written English—a test on which girls score consistently higher than boys.

"The bottom line was counting bodies," says Gretchen Rigol, executive director of admissions and guidance services for the College Board. After the change was announced, FairTest executive director Laura Barrett asked the obvious question: "Why haven't similar changes been made in similar exams [which also show a "gender gap" in scores favoring men] such as the SAT and GRE?"

WHY NOT INDEED? And why stop there? Boys are more likely than girls, for instance, to take math and science courses, particularly in high school. In his June remarks about Title IX, Clinton boasted that his administration has "stepped up enforcement" of Title IX in areas such as "access to advanced math and science programs." Norma Cantu's office last year investigated almost forty school districts that have an "under-representation" of girls in *continued on page 7*

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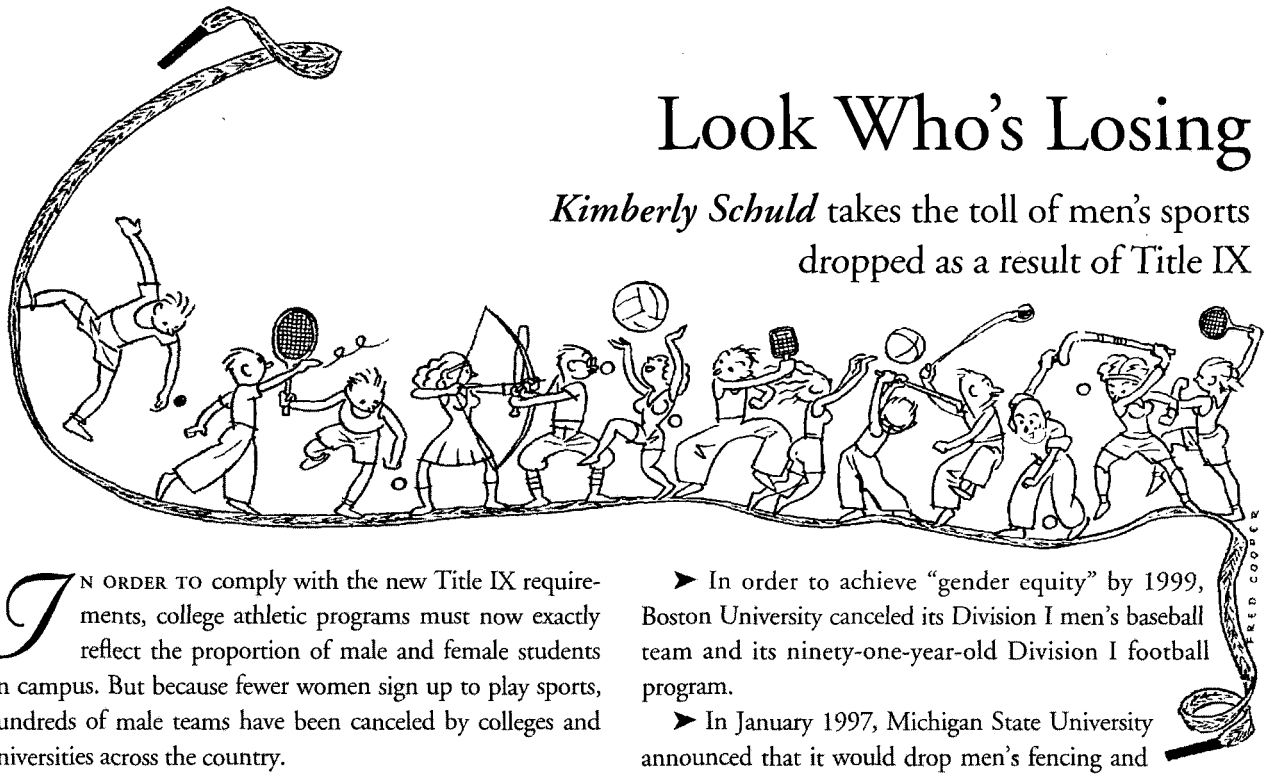
Look Who's Losing

Kimberly Schuld takes the toll of men's sports dropped as a result of Title IX



In order to comply with the new Title IX requirements, college athletic programs must now exactly reflect the proportion of male and female students on campus. But because fewer women sign up to play sports, hundreds of male teams have been canceled by colleges and universities across the country.

According to a 1997 study by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an average of 3.6 male athletes were dropped for every one woman added between 1992 and 1997. At NCAA Division III schools, where there are no athletic scholarships and athletes play for the pure love of the sport, men lost 9,056 positions while women gained only 178 during the same period.

Perversely, the quest to fulfill "gender equity" may especially punish minority males. The addition of women's teams in such sports as field hockey, golf, and skiing comes at the expense of black males who are over-represented in sports such as football and basketball—sports from which funding must be cut in order to create the new women's teams. When San Francisco State University cut the football team, thirty-four percent of the team was black. When Blinn College dropped its championship men's track team in 1995, blacks made up seventy-five percent of the team.

Here is a list of further casualties:

➤ The men's swimming, water polo, and gymnastics competitions in the 1984 Summer Olympics were dominated by graduates of UCLA athletic programs. After producing twenty-two Olympic swimming competitors and scores of world-class gymnasts, however, the programs ended in 1993 and 1994.

➤ In 1995, San Francisco State University dropped its football program to comply with Title IX regulations. "We needed about a hundred and twenty women athletes, or about six teams of twenty women each if we were going to keep football," explained athletic director Betsy Alden. "There are not even six more sports out there."

➤ In order to achieve "gender equity" by 1999, Boston University canceled its Division I men's baseball team and its ninety-one-year-old Division I football program.

➤ In January 1997, Michigan State University announced that it would drop men's fencing and lacrosse from varsity competition, and cap rosters for other men's sports, in order to add women's crew as a varsity sport and increase rosters in women's sports.

➤ In January 1997, Syracuse University decided to drop men's wrestling and gymnastics and replace them with women's softball. The male wrestling team has won a temporary reprieve.

➤ The University of Oregon has restricted the number of men on its football, wrestling, and track and field teams in order to add two women's sports over a ten year period.

➤ Thirty-one colleges and universities dropped their male golf teams between 1994 and 1996.

➤ Twenty-four colleges and universities canceled their men's wrestling teams, half of which were Division I competitors, during the same period.

Meanwhile, students shouldered additional costs to keep men's athletics alive:

➤ In April 1995, students at Sacramento State University passed a referendum to increase student fees to $45 to pay for football and other sports in order to remain in the Division I level.

➤ Students at the University of California at Davis, voted in 1993 to raise $13.50 per student per quarter for athletics through 1996.

➤ In January 1995, the University of Central Florida Board of Regents raised the athletic fee by one dollar per credit hour for athletics. ◆

Kimberly Schuld is the director of the IWF's Play Fair! project.

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advanced math and science classes and in gifted programs.

Yet another growth area of Title IX is sexual harassment. In 1992, the Supreme Court held that parents whose daughters have been harassed at school can sue the school districts—a far more lucrative target than teachers or classmates. In 1991, eleven sexual harassment complaints were filed by elementary and high school students. Four years later, the number of complaints had jumped to seventy-nine. Although the precise limits of the school districts' liability have not yet been decided (that judgment is expected from the Supreme Court this year), Cantu's office is amassing an ever thicker dossier of complaints. Advocates of wider sexual harassment litigation are especially eager to use Title IX to permit girls to sue their fellow students—an eagerness responsible for a North Carolina's school district's notorious and otherwise baffling decision last year to suspend six-year-old Jonathan Prevette for kissing a classmate.

The very uncertainty over what, if anything, Prevette did wrong only underscores the power ideological bureaucrats have to punish even a small boy who haplessly stumbles into their cross hairs. There's nothing yet in the law to permit one student to sue another for kissing her. There's not even anything in the Department of Education's compendious regulations against it. This is because the department advances its most controversial policies with a strange legal device called a "policy interpretation." A policy interpretation is what Harvard professor Louis Guenin calls "a creature of no known genus." Neither law nor regulation, the policy interpretation functions as the bureaucracy's way of putting the public on notice as to what it will consider compliance with the law.

In a policy interpretation published last year, for instance, OCR held that both "dirty jokes" and "graffiti of a sexual nature" will be construed as sexual harassment under Title IX. Furthermore, student misconduct will be regarded as every bit as serious as harassment by teachers. Such conduct, the Office for Civil Rights has said in a guide for educators, cannot be excused "with an attitude of 'boys will be boys.'" Schools should take preventative measures such as "sexual harassment awareness" training for teachers, elementary and secondary students, and parents.

As for any backtalk about constitutional rights and liberties, while "the school should pay attention to any due process or other rights the accused student or teacher *might* have [emphasis added]," the Office for Civil Rights counsels, "the school should make sure that doing so does not interfere with the protections provided to the complainant by Title IX." Technically, a policy interpretation is not binding. But recipients of federal funds are naturally eager to keep the office happy, and so for all practical purposes, policy interpretations are the law of the land.

The expansion of Title IX enforcement to include sexual harassment and classroom education has school districts worried—and feminists crowing. "It's like that [orange juice] ad, 'It's not just for breakfast anymore,'" Verna Williams of the National Women's Law Center told the *New York Times.* "Title IX's not just for sports anymore. It's a tool for making schools more hospitable for girls and women, ending sexual harassment, and winning real gender equity across the board in education."

But the feminists may not get the last laugh. For now, corrective measures designed to equalize numbers and funding between the sexes are likely to redound in favor of women. But that won't stay true. If men have a disproportionate interest in sports, engineering, and parachute school, women have equally disproportionate interests in other activities.

During the *Brown* litigation, the university studied the extra-curricular interests of its applicants. Women accounted for ninety-one percent of those who expressed an interest in dance, fifty-six percent of those who expressed an interest in drama, and sixty-six percent of applicants who expressed an interest in music. The day is not far off when a man who is denied a space in an oversubscribed acting, dance, or music class will file a lawsuit demanding that women be dropped from the program for the sake of equity.

What is perhaps most amazing about all this is that it's occurring *despite* the plain language of Title IX. Yes, the law forbids discrimination "on the basis of sex." But it goes on to say that schools are not required to "grant preferential treatment" to women "on the account of an imbalance which may exist" with respect to their ranks among athletes in comparison with their numbers in the institution as a whole. The Congress that voted for Title IX in 1972 had already witnessed the perversion of the original Civil Rights Act into a quota machine, and they were declaring as emphatically as they could that Title IX should not be used in this way.

Those good intentions, however, lasted only seven years. In 1979, the Carter administration's Department

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of Health, Education, and Welfare issued a policy interpretation—one that has reigned ever since—that replaced the old standard of equal opportunity with a new requirement of equal outcomes. And now, twenty years further on, the Clinton administration is determined to bend the law even further and demand equal outcomes in every educational program that receives so much as a single federal dollar.

To understand how breathtakingly sweeping an agenda this is, you need to recall that the federal government funds education in many places other than traditional classrooms. The House Education Committee reports that forty federal departments, commissions, and agencies dole out more than $96 billion in annual education funding to museums, state and local governments, and private businesses—as well as to schools, colleges, and universities. On top of that is the money spent on training programs conducted by the federal government itself: schools operated by the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and law enforcement training conducted by the FBI. Each and every one of these activities, whether directly or indirectly subsidized by government, will now come under new scrutiny for evidence, not of sex discrimination, but of sex imbalance. Too many men in gunnery school? Too few men getting day-care training from Indian Affairs? You've got a federal case. This is too vast an empire even for Norma Cantu to rule. So new regulations being drafted by the Department of Justice will extend to every federal department and agency the power to conduct Title IX investigations and random compliance reviews of their own.

With what consequences? Perhaps most troubling is the likelihood that Title IX may affect government funding of medical and scientific research. The National Science Foundation gives out over $109 million in assistance to male-dominated undergraduate science, engineering, and mathematics programs each year. Should that money be cut back to ensure that America graduates no more male scientists and technologists than female? What would happen to the study of disease if the National Institutes of Health, which grant more than $200 million in funding to postsecondary schools, were to be told to allocate their budgets by sex? The Department of Health and Human Services, for that matter, doles out more than $70 million in training nurses each year. Is it prepared to cut back on that training if fewer than half of those nurses are men?

Though the Department of Justice has yet to make the new Title IX regulations public—or even share them with Congress—there are ominous signs of what their final form might take. In December, the Department of Education racheted up its regulatory commitment to quotas, notifying some universities that "exact proportionality" would now be required when awarding financial assistance to female athletes. Previously, schools had attempted to achieve "substantial proportionality" by bringing the percentage of their scholarship-assisted female athletes within five points of the total percentage of female athletes. That same month, President Clinton appointed Bill Lann Lee acting assistant attorney general for civil rights. Lee is a longtime advocate of race and sex quotas, and it will be under Lee's authority that the final Title IX regulations are issued.

The few congressmen who are paying any attention to the issue are muttering that it would behoove the Department of Justice to check with Congress before issuing any new Title IX regulations. If not, they warn, Congress has the authority to conduct hearings on proposed regulations and ultimately to block them if they don't reflect the intent of the statute. Since the statute explicitly forbids quotas, Congress' authority is clear and ample.

But don't hold your breath. Though its original meaning has been distorted and its day-to-day effects are destructive, Title IX is riding an unprecedented wave of commercial and political success. The Women's National Basketball Association and its corporate sponsors—behemoths like Coca-Cola, Nike, and American Express—celebrated the league's debut last year with banners festooning stadiums that read, "Thanks Title IX." The law has accumulated a constituency of powerful special-interest elites willing to brand any politician "sexist" who disagrees with their Orwellian vision of sexual equality. Will a Republican party terrified of the gender gap really stand fast as sex quotas move from the playing field to the classroom? Michael Williams, who ran the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in the Bush administration, sadly observes that the quota advocates "won the sports battle."

As things stand, they look likely to win the battle for the classroom and the research lab, too. ◆

Jessica Gavora is the former director of the Independent Women's Forum's Play Fair! project.

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This Hurts Me More Than You

Peter Worthington defends the strap

No one seems to notice the oddity that there is more violence, disrespect, guns, knives, and defiance in elementary schools than there ever was in the bad old days when boys routinely fought at recess, were punished with the strap, and caused not a murmur in small towns when they walked down Main Street carrying .22 rifles.

The people now in positions of influence in the school system are the products of permissive education, and subscribe to the myth that boys and girls are essentially the same, and that things like school-yard fights and the strap are unacceptable.

When my son was in public school in the late sixties and early seventies, it was the era of open, unstructured classes, no competition, no fighting, and certainly nothing resembling corporal punishment. Hugging was preferable to roughhousing, and putting pressure on kids to achieve was a no-no.

I remember one principal, a matronly woman, summoning my ex-wife and me to a special meeting because she feared our seven-year-old son had a latent violent streak. As proof, she showed us one of his recent drawings— tanks shooting, ships firing, planes bombing, explosions everywhere. Atop the page was awkwardly lettered "WORLD WAR 1." I said I thought boys drawing pictures of wars was normal. She smiled one of those teacher-knows-best smiles and brought out another drawing. It was of more planes, bombs, tanks, and explosions. This one was titled "WORLD WAR 2." I shrugged so what; my ex-wife looked nervous.

The principal then brought out a succession of other drawings, variously marked WORLD WAR 3, WORLD WAR 4, WORLD WAR 5. To the principal this unwholesome fixation on war indicated possible violence in the home. Both women looked accusingly at me. I quipped that I thought the drawings showed the kid was

an optimist—most of us couldn't think beyond WWIII, and here he was up to WWV. Ex-wife and the principal glanced at each other, apprehensions confirmed.

As one who is of the generation that routinely fought in school and regularly got belted by teachers, I'd argue that both played a vital part in molding not only good character, but civilized character. For boys, fighting is normal, almost a rite of passage. I consider myself something of a lay expert in school fights, since I was the son of a pre-war regular soldier. Every year my father was transferred and I had to join a new school in mid-term. To find my slot in the pecking order, I routinely had to fight the class tough guy. It wasn't whether you won or lost that was important, but how you conducted yourself: Did you fight hard, did you cry, did you show fear, did you run away? Spunk meant status.

In those days, boys got the strap for a variety of offenses—misdemeanors, cheekiness, laziness, not paying attention, failing to do homework, playing the clown. When caught, you'd be hauled to the front of the class and get two to six strokes on each hand. The higher the number, the greater the prestige—or shame, if perchance you cried or winced. The class would look on with a mixture of interest and relief that it was you and not them. "Taking punishment like a man," was the highest accolade. On rare occasions, if you moved your hand so the strap missed, you were something of a hero, especially if the teacher hit his own leg. Not many had the guts to do this. On returning to your seat after the strap, if you winked, or rolled your eyes, or smothered a grin, you gained status. If you hung your head or whimpered, you lost status.

I agree there's risk in dishing out corporal punishment in schools, as sadists and bullies aren't unknown in the teaching trade. Kids, however, quickly learn which teachers to avoid provoking. For the most part I think something important was lost when the strap was banned. We should remember that it was that generation of boys for whom the strap in school was normal and routine who fought and won World War II and were endowed with many of those virtues of courage, loyalty, duty, and honor that seem in such short supply today.

As for my son, soon after the meeting with the principal he transferred to a more structured school, and his school work improved under discipline and competition. Today he is happily married, has a good job, and hasn't started a single war. ◆

Peter Worthington is founding editor of the Toronto Sun *and a syndicated columnist.*

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Nice Girls Who Kill Their Babies

Patricia Pearson on the teenagers who trash their newborns, and the people who defend them

THE DAY THE baby was found, naked, entangled in the reeds along the shore of Laurel Lake, the heat was almost unbearable. It was September, but the affluent towns of Long Island's North Fork, across Montauk Bay from the celebrity-crowded Hamptons, were doing brisk business at the ski and board shops as local teens traversed Main Road from the salty Atlantic to the freshwater pond tucked in behind Laurel Lake Vineyards. A couple of swimmers splashing through the sandy shallows noticed Michael James Ellwood, of indeterminate age—a day, a month, it was hard to tell—no one was going to stare into a dead child's face.

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The news got around pretty fast, bouncing through Peconic, Mattituck, Cutchogue, and Greenport as people stopped in at The Cider Mill, Wayhouse Antiques, and McDonald's, until eventually it reached Michael's mother, who was hanging out at her friend Cheryl's house. Amy Ellwood, the eighteen-year-old, college-bound daughter of two local teachers, summer employee of Dave Allen's Tent and Party Services, was shocked. Not by the news itself—she knew where she'd disposed of her son on the day of his birth—but by the fact that people she didn't know, adults in suits with somber faces, were making inquiries. She hadn't anticipated an investigation. "I couldn't imagine," she later said, "why the police were involved."

Amy Ellwood, of English rose complexion and long blond hair, inhabited a corner of the universe so tidy and safe that she might have been Betty, denizen of Riverdale in the Archie comics. Hers was a world of trim, white sidewalks shaded by apple and elm trees, a community both prosperous and placid; a world in which the teen still reigns supreme. Parents are benevolent but unobtrusive, providing their kids with cars, kisses, and spiffy clothes—not negligent parents, just confident ones, who smile over the good report cards issued by Mattituck-Cutchogue High School, which itself could have been in Riverdale, with its red-brick facade, white-pillared entrance, and glossy green lawns.

So it was that for several months in 1989, Amy Ellwood went about the earnest tasks of doing homework, getting good grades, co-editing the school literary journal, and attending the German club, all the while growing progressively rounder with child, and not one adult—not her parents, not her gym teacher, not the wives who work part time at the A&P mall where she hung out—remarked on her condition. Under the circumstances, the idea that she was now a suspect in a criminal investigation came as a hair-raising surprise.

Ellwood's bemusement is evident on September 12, 1989, in a videotaped statement taken by the Suffolk County district attorney's office after her friend Cheryl tipped off the police about who the Laurel Lake baby's mother might be.

Assistant District Attorney Randall Hinrichs interrogates Amy politely. She responds in kind; neither is remotely overheated. They could be going through a theft complaint. Amy peers at Hinrichs through her bangs, a poised young woman whose expression suggests she's just found herself on Mars and is trying to avoid sudden movements lest she aggravate the aliens.

Her story, as it unfurls through this interview and at her subsequent trial, began in August 1988, when she met nineteen-year-old Chris Wilshusen. He was a maverick, a pretty cool guy who had recently been expelled from the high school where Amy's father served as principal. That lent their romance a Romeo and Juliet quality; it had to be kept secret from her family. They began dating, she said, "four days before my seventeenth birthday"—the sort of detail so treasured by young women in love they consider it a date to celebrate as an anniversary.

Amy's revelation came on New Year's Eve, at a party cluttered with beer and wine coolers and most of her girlfriends, a group who dubbed themselves "the Circle of Women." But it was a boy to whom she turned. Randy Sigurdson was in the kitchen when Amy came in, crying. She'd just had a fight with Chris, and she blurted out the news. "It was after midnight," he told the jury at Amy's trial, "and I don't remember [what] led to it, but we were just talking and she said that she had a couple of problems and that she was pregnant." Randy was sympathetic. But this wasn't the era of the Scarlet Letter, when pregnancy out of wedlock was catastrophic, leading to social ostracism; nor even a time when immediate marriage was called for lest the girl slip away in shame to a special home. "I said there's lots of things you can do; there's adoption, or abortion."

Amy Ellwood was intelligent, aware; she knew what her options were. But they were such unexpected options to confront. "You see, when I was studying biology," she would testify, weary and defensive, "I was in tenth grade. I wasn't exactly planning on having a baby. It wasn't like I was learning the stuff for my own use." Yet she understood that her decision had a deadline, less than three months to opt for "termination," and a few months after that, the body announcing itself, and then a baby, bawling and clinging to her life forever.

For a time, she convinced herself that she wasn't pregnant after all. Then, toward the end of February, when Amy's parents went on a holiday cruise, her friend Dawn Swiatocha spent the week sleeping over at her house. One night they decided to drive to the drugstore and pick up a home pregnancy test. The timing was strikingly adolescent, like filching from the liquor cabinet or smoking a joint and raiding the fridge, things to do when parents are away. The test was positive, and that abruptly changed the mood. "I asked her if she was going to have an abortion," Dawn

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said, "and she said she wasn't sure." Mostly, she didn't want to think about it. "I did not want to believe I was pregnant," Amy testified.

Nevertheless, she discussed it with Chris. His response was typical of young men in these times: to become awkwardly solemn, respectful of a woman's "right to choose," tell you they'll stand by you, help you with the money, drive you to the clinic, whatever. They won't break up with you, they promise, they ask if you're okay; they even evince shy pleasure at the fact that you've conceived their child. But they don't offer to marry you, and you don't expect them to, and they don't stake a claim to the baby, and you wouldn't expect that, either. At some point, after this is all over, the odds are very good that they'll vanish from your life. Not because you spawned an incipient family together and lost it, and the relationship was strained by the trauma, but because love itself is disposable.

For the post-sexual revolution generation, raised on a rhetoric that celebrated sexual freedom but had no memory of what the revolution was for, there are no links between intimacy and commitment, pregnancy and childbirth, sex and the beginning of a bright, constructive love. AIDS may have made them more fearful, ushering in a fad of celibacy, but it hasn't taught them how to take care of their hearts. For Ellwood, the decision to have her child or not had to be made in a vacuum. "We talked about it, I guess, the decision we had to make," she said at trial, "and at some point the most sensible thing to do was get an abortion." But "sensible" was pure abstraction. "It didn't feel like the right thing for me to do. Just the fact that it was Chris' and my baby and I—I couldn't do it."

Without being able to articulate what she'd found, Ellwood held on. She held on the way that a child, discovering something of uncertain value, a beautiful shell on the beach, carries it in the palm of her hand until, unable to grasp any further purpose for it, she lets it fall to the sand. "At the very beginning, after I decided that I wasn't going to get the abortion, it still didn't seem real that I was pregnant." She quit smoking for about three weeks, then resumed, perhaps because to quit was to acknowledge the baby. "Later on, when I started to gain weight, I realized that it wasn't going to go away, and it was real, and I was pregnant."

There is a late-June high school graduation photograph of Ellwood, smiling through a bouquet of flowers on the steps of the school, surrounded by family and school chums. She is about seven months pregnant, blooming outward from her gown, her smooth, pale face still baby-round. In July, after observing her in a bathing suit, Amy's parents gingerly asked her to take "a test." Instead, she took off for several days with Chris.

"My parents and I were pretty close," she would later say, defending them against insinuations about the "frightened seventeen-year-old girl" who conceals a pregnancy from parents to evade their wrath. "They just basically let me make my own decisions and they trusted me. They felt I was responsible, [but] I never really had any problems that I would have to go to them with." This, as the first problem, was far too disastrous to confess. Ellwood's father said, "We goofed, that's true, we knew she was pregnant...but we were scared if we pushed it she would end up on the road with her boyfriend." Plus, her mother Patricia added, "We thought there was more time....We're both trained educators. But that doesn't make us experts."

Left to their own devices and running out of time, Chris and Amy began tossing around ideas. "I was going to go down to North Carolina to a friend of his. There's a house down there. And I was going to put the baby up for adoption....I kept putting it off. I just—I didn't want to deal with it, and I just figured I would do it someday." As the summer progressed, her friends grew increasingly worried. "In August, we were in my car," Dawn Swiatocha told the jury, "and I said that it was getting kind of close to, you know, her pregnancy being over, and I asked what she was going to do, and she said that she had talked to someone about adoption—that she had spoken to a lady and the lady was going to take care of everything."

But at 3:30 in the morning on September 8, when Amy sat up in her Raggedy Ann sheets, awoken by contractions, and began to pace back and forth between her bedroom and the bathroom, there wasn't any lady to take care of everything. "I knew I was in labor," she said. But when her mother knocked on the bathroom door around six—"Amy, are you all right?"—Amy said, "I'm fine." She wasn't. "I was scared." But she'd made a decision. The baby was going to go away now. The problem was going to end. This was not going to be a live birth, it was going to be a miscarriage; that happens, doesn't it, and it isn't the mother's fault, is it?

The video camera rolls in the district attorney's office. A pack of cigarettes, a cup of coffee, and a tin foil ashtray have been placed before Amy Ellwood, but she touches none of them, not even to fidget. Instead, she leans forward, shoulders slightly

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slouched, resting her elbows on the table, and interlocks her fine-boned hands. She is concentrating hard, watchful and compliant. Because Randall Hinrichs has asked her, she says, "My water broke around five, five-thirty." He keeps asking, and she keeps answering, detail by detail. "I went into the bathroom, into the shower....Uh, that's when I started giving birth....My brother Brian probably left around six and my parents left around seven or seven-fifteen....It [came out] around six-thirty, seven....I pulled on the umbilical cord and pulled out the afterbirth, I heard it make a noise, twice, I saw its legs jerk....I put a towel around the baby and I picked it up out of the bathtub and I put it into a bucket. I added another towel around it and I brought it into my room....I fell asleep."

At some point in this account, Hinrichs needs to clarify an issue: Was Amy Ellwood intending to be a good mother, but didn't know enough, when she wrapped her boy in towels and placed him in a bucket?

"I just decided I could—"

"You thought you could—"

Their words overlap.

"Yeah—"

"I don't want to put words in your mouth—"

"Get away with it?" She fixes him with a grim half-smile.

"Get rid of the baby right after it was born?"

"Yeah." She adds, "Well, that's not what I planned all along. You know, I planned to tell my parents eventually, but I never—I never could."

"And you decided you weren't going to help the baby once it was born?"

"I don't know what I was thinking. I just—I thought my parents wouldn't find out that way."

On September 12, the Suffolk County district attorney's office charged Ellwood with one count of murder in the second degree. A grand jury then reduced the charge to manslaughter.

In 1988, more than four thousand teenagers between the ages of ten and nineteen became pregnant in Suffolk County. Some had abortions, others gave their newborns up for adoption, others kept them. A handful, as Amy Ellwood did in 1989, gave birth to them and gave them back to God.

A colleague of Ellwood's father watched his daughter, Loretta Campbell, plead innocent in Hempstead to charges of second-degree manslaughter for smothering a boy she'd given birth to on January 1, 1991, at a friend's house in affluent Hewlett and leaving him in a garbage bag. Two weeks earlier, a C.W. Post College sophomore had been charged with first-degree manslaughter for killing her newborn boy. A twenty-year-old Brentwood woman threw her baby out a window, and an East Northport woman left her infant to drown in a tub. Other babies in Suffolk County were found by the police but never connected to those who destroyed them. Still others were probably never found.

Across the country, according to the National Center on Health Statistics, the killing of infant children climbed fifty-five percent between 1985 and 1988, until it was several times the rate at which adult women were murdered. Nearly half of the child maltreatment fatalities between 1985 and 1992 in the United States involved infants up to a year old. According to data compiled by the World Health Organization, infanticide was (as recently as the mid-1970s) as common as or more common than the killing of adults in most of the industrialized nations, from Canada to Austria to Japan. In the United States, more infant boys are killed than girls. An American one-year-old is as likely to be attacked by a woman as a man, while the vast majority of murdered newborns are victims of women. A wide consensus exists within the community of academicians who try to track neonaticide that many "neonates are discarded but not found, making the overall rate...considerably higher than the data suggest."

Ever alert to the possibilities of a new trend, the media turned their short attention span to this issue in the early part of the decade. In April 1991, for example, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* ran a story headlined, "Infanticide Increasing, Experts Fear." The story cited more than a dozen cases in Missouri and southern Illinois in the previous five years and commented, "Authorities have no idea how many have gone undetected." The cases reported by the *Post-Dispatch* echoed those in Long Island—babies born in dorm rooms and disposed of in trash cans. A forensic psychiatrist at the Menninger Clinic told the newspaper, "Most of the young women who kill their newborns are quite young, single, uneducated, and desperate. The child is obviously a burden to them, and they get rid of the burden the only way they can think of, by killing it."

Amy Ellwood's parents retained a lawyer for her, Eric Naiburg, who told the media that he planned to launch an "unwed-mother syndrome" defense. He explained that women who deny their pregnancy and neglect their newborns suffer mental derangement caused by being young and single. "In the mind of a frightened seventeen-year-old," Naiburg said, "the realiza-

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tion of pregnancy is not like flicking on a switch." Amy was troubled, he explained, because her parents didn't approve of her boyfriend. "She tried to please her parents a lot." Her father thought of her as his "good little girl." The suggestion of a wrathful father lurking behind the scenes added a *frisson* of drama.

What Ellwood did on the day that her son lived and died was as follows: "I went and got garbage bags from my garage so I could put the baby in them. Then I...got a Styrofoam cooler and put another garbage bag inside of it and then I put the other garbage bag inside of that one. I put the cooler in the hatchback of my car. Then I took a shower, and I washed my sheets. Then I went to my friend Cheryl's house. I told her I had a miscarriage and that I'd been to the hospital the night before. We went to 7-Eleven and got something to drink and then we went back to her house and watched TV for a while. She wanted to go swimming and so we went down to Laurel Lake ....We only stayed there for about a half hour. Then we went and she got ice cream and then I went and dropped her off and then I went home."

Having driven around all afternoon with a dead or dying infant in the car, Amy decided to call Chris. "I told him the same thing that I'd told Cheryl because I didn't want them to know, you know. He asked if I was okay and he asked why they didn't make me stay in the hospital." A couple of hours later, she met him at the A&P parking lot. "[Then] he went to Greenport to a friend's house, and I went to Riverhead with my friend Cheryl." Emotion momentarily flushes into Ellwood's voice, triggered, seemingly, by the memory of Chris going off with his friends—the revelation that the intimate links are, indeed, so eroded that a man makes no connection to the child he's just lost and cannot rearrange his social schedule to console the mother, any more than she could connect with the child or reveal his fate to the man. The parents went their separate ways along the Main Road, leaving their son behind in a two-dollar cooler in Amy's parked Toyota.

Around 10:00 P.M., Ellwood returned from Riverhead where she'd been hanging out with friends at a place they called "The Circle," a traffic round-about with a rock in the middle. She picked up her car, drove around for about ten minutes, and made her way through darkness to the lake. "I parked my car and, uh, shut my lights off and I opened the back and I took the cooler out and...I waded into the water and I dumped the cooler." Later, in her defense, the pastor at Amy Ellwood's family church wrote a letter to her judge describing what she'd done in the lake as "a baptism."

At the end of his interrogation, Hinrichs holds up a police photo of a dead infant for the video camera to zoom carefully in upon. Across the bottom, written in Ellwood's flowery hand: "This is the baby I gave birth to." She will not look at her son.

Newsday ran an editorial at the time of Ellwood's trial that was sympathetic to her refusal to face what she'd done. "Almost everyone practices denial at one time or another. We may put off calling the plumber in hope that the leak will go away; or avoid breast self-examination because we don't want to find cancer....Amy Ellwood is troubled, not malicious." The view is shared by Suffolk County Detective Lieutenant John Gierasch, who investigates the babies abandoned in his county. "It's like having a simple problem—your car doesn't work, and you're not a car person, so you just let it go, and the next thing you know you're broken down on the side of the road. You're procrastinating; you just defer and defer and pretty soon you have a mess on your hands. [These girls] must make some half-assed attempt to determine that they are pregnant, just to confirm in their own minds, so it's not like they're denying that they're pregnant to themselves. They're denying it to the world. They're just not going to deal with it, which maybe young females are more inclined to do than other people. I don't know if you can call that aggression. But if you shove toilet paper down its throat because it's crying to shut it up, that crosses another line, that's aggression. I mean Ellwood just wrapped it up, put it in a bag, and disposed of it. There was no overt homicidal act."

The community perspective on Ellwood's act of neonaticide raises some important questions about who is in denial here. Our myths about maternal grace—under pressure, pure as nature—are so deeply ingrained that infanticide is the one crime to be all but ignored in discussions of violence. Murdered infants have been showing up lately on the evening news with surprising frequency. But to most of us, they aren't reflective, somehow, of female aggression. We only prick up our ears to what, as French historian Michel Foucault once said, is "in the truth." Another young offender on a shooting spree? Look at what's going on with kids today! Another woman raped in Central Park? A new serial attacker! It is as if the killing of newborns and infants fails to compute. As a result, every time a new

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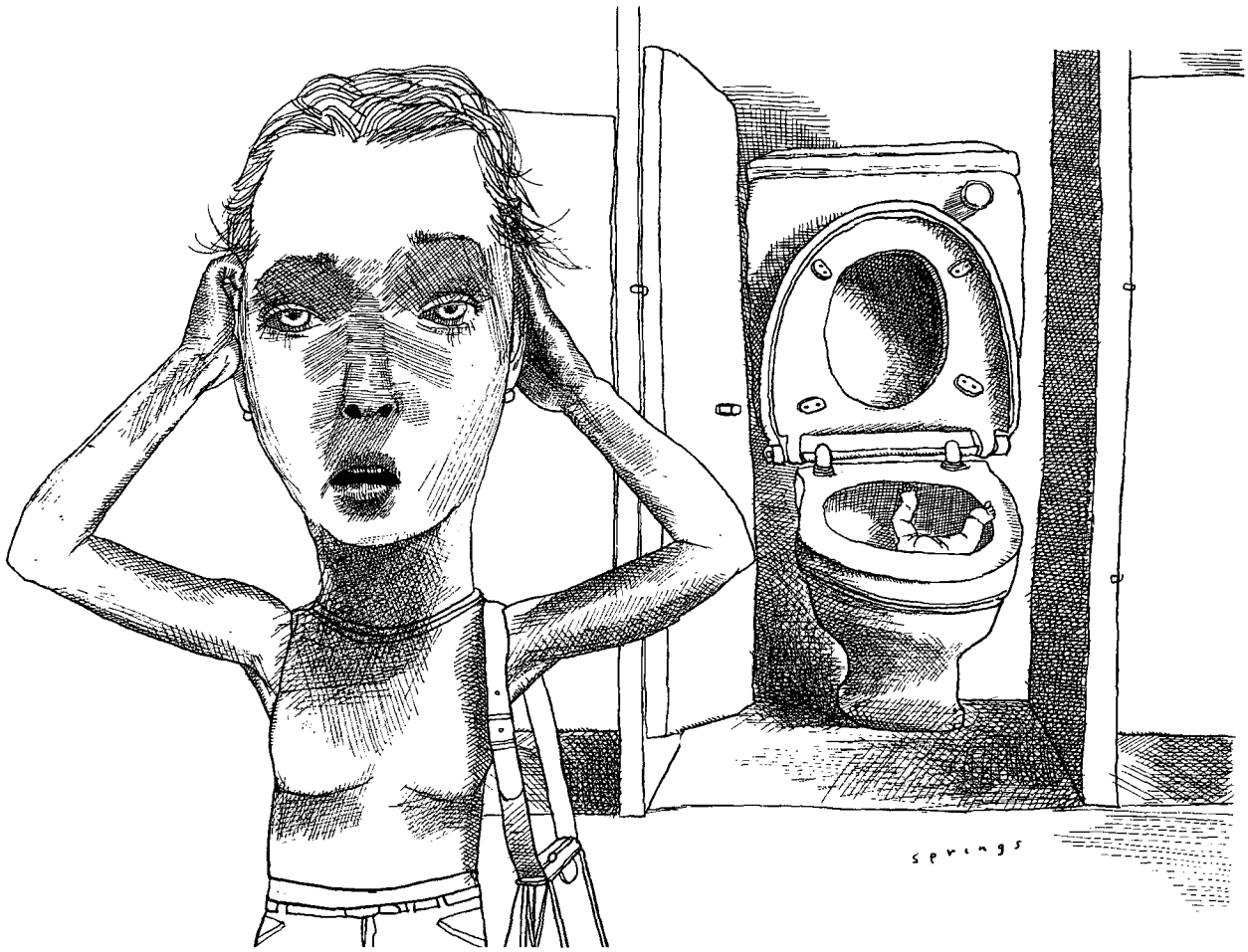
case compels our attention, we are left to grasp at a few clichés, to point fingers and to invent syndromes, as the moral ground shifts beneath our feet.

When women like Amy Ellwood commit neonaticide, they tend not to be considered women, exactly. They are "young" and "unwed." They are "uneducated." They can't think what else to do with newborn children except stuff them in Dumpsters. In other words, they are not mothers in a culturally understood and celebrated way. Mothers are strong, long-suffering, altruistic, and resourceful. Mothers are never callous; they are not indifferent.

Ellwood seemed to understand this distinction and to play to it when she testified in her own defense on March 5, 1991. She brought tears to the eyes of Suffolk County jurors when she told them she thought she had miscarried, thought her baby was premature and stillborn when it arrived. She knew nothing of biology. She had imagined that her baby "had gills in the back of its neck and that's how it breathed in the fluid." Had she known that her son was alive, she told the jury, when he made his plaintive sounds and kicked his feet, "I would have picked the baby up and loved it like any mother would."

Research on maternal aggression is stunningly scant. Most of it is lumped into a single category of madness, linked directly to female hormones. "Postpartum depression," also known as "new-mother syndrome," has been advanced for well over a century to explain why good women would turn inexplicably violent. About half of all women who give birth do experience a hormonal shift within three to eight days that makes them disconsolate, weepy, or irritable. Sometimes called the "baby blues," this passing storm is loosely comparable to how one feels in early pregnancy or premenstrually. It isn't a springboard for serious aggression. It comes, it goes. The body resolves itself.

About one in five hundred women, however, get more unhinged when they have a baby, to the point of becoming suicidal or homicidal. Some enter a frightening realm of the mind known as postpartum psychosis. They become delusional, they hallucinate, their babies fall from bridges, are suffocated, drown. Within the medical community, there are those who insist that postpartum psychosis is purely hormonal—that if women are treated with hormone supplements while still



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in the hospital after giving birth, they'll remain grounded and content in their new maternal role. Internationally, the most prominent advocates of this view are members of the Marce Society, a research organization devoted to isolating the biological underpinnings of postpartum disorders. The implicit logic of this view is that hormonal insanity is something to which all women are automatically susceptible as soon as they get wheeled out of the delivery room.

It only tends to be women who dupe the public into pitying them for a lost or kidnapped baby who receive severe punishment when the truth comes out, as happened to Susan Smith. Most women aren't incarcerated for infanticide. Of those who are even convicted, about two thirds avoid prison, and the rest receive an average sentence of seven years. In England between 1982 and 1989, fewer than ten percent of mothers convicted of manslaughter for killing their children (at any age) were imprisoned; only two of the mothers who'd committed infanticide were. British fathers were more likely to be charged with murder than manslaughter. More than half of the fathers convicted of manslaughter went to jail. Three times as many mothers as fathers are deemed to be mentally ill for killing their children.

We seem to permit a maternal sphere of influence over our youngest citizens, which recedes as children grow and enter the public domain. A woman who is acquitted of infanticide will not so easily escape censure for killing a child. Our collective sense of what is aggressive, of what we deem to be acceptable or unacceptable violence, is reflected in the comments of Detective Gierasch: "To me, when girls have babies without anyone else effectively knowing—I don't view it as aggression in the classic sense. My feelings aren't so strong, personally, with respect to that. But young toddlers, children, if they're the victims of outright homicide, is about as outrageous as I deal with." The child, as opposed to the baby, is the most cherished of all potential victims in our society. This is why a postpartum mother may not, in her "hormonally induced" psychosis, attack an older child and still be considered "more victim than victimizer."

Yet juries frequently cry when delivering verdicts in infanticide cases—as they did at Amy Ellwood's trial—regardless of whether their decision is innocence or guilt. According to Phillip Resnick, a professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, these juries are sympathetic because, "they view the mothers as having lost their most valuable possession already, in terms of the infant." It is curious that Resnick should say "possession." If children are regarded as citizens worthy of our protection, infants are perceived, on some level, as mere extensions of women.

Suffolk County Court Judge Stuart Namm, known in legal circles on Long Island as a progressive who generally sympathizes with the poor and downtrodden, was not at all sympathetic to Amy Ellwood. He sensed a moral vacuum at the heart of the trial, an absence of cultural wisdom to sustain the overwhelming support for his defendant. A long-faced, gray-haired judge with thick, dark glasses, Namm gazed at Ellwood as she leaned into the protective arm of her lawyer.

"This, Amy, was no miscarriage," he began, urging her to give up the satisfying lie she'd told herself. "It was no abortion. It was no baptism. This was purely and simply an act of selfish and reckless manslaughter." He turned his attention to her supporters, including Long Island's most tireless victims' rights advocates, who'd broken ranks in this instance to embrace Ellwood. "All of you believe that you are the real victims," Namm said. "Well, I'm sorry, but I don't agree."

He lectured Ellwood's parents for failing to intervene when they knew she was pregnant. He criticized her lawyer for promising the "unwed-mother syndrome" defense, which never materialized. He chastised the district attorney's office for trying to plea-bargain the sentence down to probation, and he expressed anger at the probation department for offering a sixteen-page personal evaluation with extensive psychological analysis, which Namm had not requested.

Judge Namm didn't see any evidence that Michael James Ellwood had been valued. Sentiments about motherhood and young womanhood had together usurped a respect for the child. "It is my firm belief," he told Ellwood, "that you have yet to come to grips with the tragedy." No one, he said, "can callously take someone else's life and walk away with a slap on the wrist." He sentenced her to two-and-a-half years to seven-and-a-half years in prison. Eric Naiburg appealed, and a New York State appellate judge permitted Ellwood to postpone prison until February 8, 1995 so that she could go to college. ◆

This article is adapted from Patricia Pearson's recent book, When She Was Bad: Violent Women and the Myth of Innocence. *© Patricia Pearson 1997. Reprinted by arrangement with Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Putnam, Inc. To order the book, please call 800/253-6476.*

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The Abuse Excuse

Sally L. Satel on feminists' latest attempt to gut welfare reform

FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS usually support any government action that would put more women in the workforce—except when those women are on welfare. In their current battle to gut welfare reform, women's groups may have found an effective weapon in battered women.

The National Organization for Women says that holding abused women to the requirements of welfare reform—those that insist recipients work and end their benefits after five years—will put them in even further jeopardy. How? Forcing these women to leave their apartments to go to a job, NOW says, increases the opportunity for violent ex-lovers to stalk them. The group also insists that battered women shouldn't be held to the same work schedules as other welfare recipients because their abusive mates might prevent them from getting out the door in the morning, or these women might be embarrassed to show up with a black eye. "For a woman who is already in danger, enforcing the [work requirement and cut-off] would be like making her stand on a trap door," says Kim Gandy, executive vice president of NOW.

NOW and other women's organizations support a new bill that would, if passed by legislators, permit thousands of women on welfare to opt out of the reforms. The Murray-Wellstone Amendment on Domestic Violence, which is currently making its way through Congress, would permit states to exempt victims of domestic violence from both the five-year cash cut-off and the work requirement.

Current welfare law, however, already makes provisions for women who can legitimately show they need more time to get off welfare, including victims of domestic abuse. As it is, seventy percent of the entire caseload is already exempted from work requirements in 1998. In 2002, when the reforms are fully implemented, half the caseload will still be eligible for exemption. In addition, when the five-year-limit on cash assistance takes effect in 2001, states can still exempt twenty percent of their caseload for "as long as necessary," again including abuse victims.

If anything, the amendment puts abused women at even greater risk by turning these women into cash cows for their deadbeat lovers. Consider: A mother and her children are living with a shiftless lout who sponges off her government check, food stamps, and Section 8 apartment. He learns that battered women can keep getting their benefits. If keeping his partner brutalized means a regular check for him, some men will do just that.

What the amendment does, furthermore, is to encourage welfare recipients to turn every altercation between intimates into a documented police emergency. If states require evidence of an arrest, imagine how many households will be calling 911 over minor skirmishes or made-up incidents. What will happen to the real victims of domestic violence if police become cynical over women crying wolf?

Finally, the proposal's impossibly broad definition of "domestic violence"—including "mental abuse"—means that virtually every woman who wants to can qualify for a temporary waiver from her work requirements. Such requirements "neglect to consider the time...that emotional injuries need to heal," says Gandy. By that logic, a woman who has suffered anguish of any kind should get a pass—for instance, if she claims she's feeling a little too upset to work one day. Yes, there may be times when real victims need a break. But they already have that under current law.

Despite this, the Senate passed Murray-Wellstone ninety-eight to one last September. If Murray-Wellstone succeeds, it could inflict a heavy blow to welfare reform. For groups like NOW, who claim that workfare is "slavery," that would be a sweet victory. But for mothers on welfare it would be an extraordinary setback. Escaping the rolls means independence for women; a dual freedom from the parasitic men in their lives and the welfare trap. Isn't this what feminism should stand for? ◆

Sally L. Satel, M.D., is a psychiatrist and lecturer at the Yale School of Medicine. She serves on the National Advisory Board of the Independent Women's Forum.

Detail from a woodcut by John Held Jr.

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Dispatch

Better Dead than Club Med

Danielle Crittenden's worst family winter vacation ever

ANYONE WHO HAS attempted to take a pleasant, relaxing vacation with small children knows that it can't be done. The children aren't entirely to blame. Travel has sadly declined since the days of great ocean liners. Ticket agents baldly lie, flights get canceled without warning, waiting lounges resemble Moroccan bazaars, and airline personnel become legally blind in the vicinity of anyone struggling with a folding stroller, a baby, and a carry-on bag. Traveling with children reduces you further, not just to a lower class but to a lower caste. Certain types of resorts won't take you. People won't sit next to you. You may only eat in places that are self-serve, have booster seats available, and "sneeze guards" covering the salads.

The wise simply give up trying to take a holiday until their kids are older. Unfortunately, I grew up in Canada, where a winter holiday—or escape, as Canadians more aptly call it—is considered as necessary as vinegar on chips. There is a wind that kicks in about the beginning of February, whose only purpose seems to be to remind you that just when you thought it couldn't possibly get colder, it can. You step outside the door and the snow is blowing sideways down the street, and this wind races up your nostrils like two jabbing ice picks. It causes, too, a temporary amnesia about what a bad idea family vacations are. When I last felt it, we were living in Toronto with our children who were then aged two and four. To get them out of the house, you'd have to dress them like Neil Armstrong going for a moon walk. Even then, the second they got out the door, they'd cry and plead to come

back in. You begin staring at the ads for Antigua on passing buses, and combing the back pages of newspapers for bargain fares....

The three winters previous, we'd gone to a spartan little inn on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Its chief appeal was that you could rent a small cottage, so you didn't actually have to share a bedroom with your children. It was also cheap. We'd arrive with high hopes, sucking in the warm salty air and pointing at the palm trees. Then, after ten days of bad weather, ear infections, near drownings, relentless whining, greasy hamburgers, fights over rubber alligators, and hours pacing up and down airport terminals with a stroller, we would vow never ever to do it again. But come February, and that wind, we would be overcome with forgetfulness. We did something wrong last year. This year we will get it right. And there would be that bus ad for Antigua....

"Have you tried Club Med?" our travel agent asked when I called her during the great blizzard of '96. "They have tremendous programs for kids."

Until then, I had sneered at Club Meds. Just because I am a miserable, formula-stained wretch traveling with children doesn't mean I'm a packaged-vacation sort of person. Besides, weren't Club Meds supposed to be hedonistic places for singles?

"Not any more," the agent assured me. "They're now very geared to families."

How Nineties. But as she described the Club Med on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas, where the weather would be more reliably hot than in Florida but the plane ride nearly as short, it occurred to me that when you have kids you discover you are a lot of things you thought you weren't. Like a packaged-vacation sort of person. My husband was more skeptical. "Think about it," I said, persuading him. "We dump the kids in the programs. Then *we* spend the day on the beach reading and playing tennis. We haven't done that in *years.*"

SO WE PAID in advance and shortly found ourselves on the plane to Eleuthera, via Miami. Our plane was late, so we missed our connection. Our luggage vanished. A Club Med official at the airport told us there was nothing she could do, except recommend we take the 7:00 A.M. flight to the Bahamas the next morning. All other flights were full. She suggested this without glancing at our two children, already ripping each

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other to shreds in their double stroller. We spent the first night of our paid vacation in a seedy Travelodge near the Miami airport, with the kids jumping on the bed.

The next morning we arrived in Eleuthera, bleary-eyed. The sky was a bit overcast, but no worry: The warm air smelled pungently tropical. "Look kids! Palm trees!" Our luggage had even reappeared and was waiting for us in the shed of a terminal. After standing in line for forty minutes to have our documents processed by an officious Bahamian official, who took immense pride in his job of protecting his island from illegal Canadian immigration, we climbed into a very wobbly taxi—whose tire blew out as soon as it was safely in the middle of nowhere. No worry. The driver had a very bald spare. He wished us a fine holiday when we eventually wobbled through the gates of the Club Med.

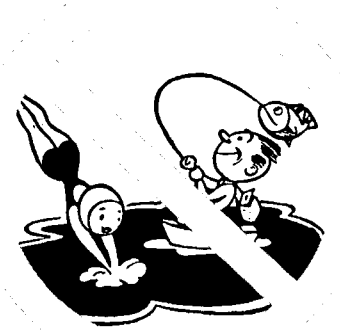
"Now we can relax," I said hopefully.

A sprightly, handsome man rushed up to the taxi to greet us. "Hiya Dave!" he called out to my husband, who bristled. "I'm Ron! Follow me!" The greeter led us to a table inside the gates, near a pool-bar complex that included a small stage. An aerobics class was taking place with pulsing music broadcast over a loudspeaker. There was also some bizarre spectacle going on poolside: a female guest was sitting on a chair, telling her personal history into a microphone—"I have two brothers back home. Basically I grew up in Omaha"—to a small assembly of strangers. Meanwhile, the friendly man was giving us instructions while my husband filled out an enormous stack of forms. "There is only salt water in the rooms, so you'll want to drink bottled water, " he was saying. "You'll want to exchange your money for beads, which you can use to buy drinks." He looked at us. "Have you ever been to a Club Med?"

We shook our heads. "You'll find our philosophy is quite different from other resorts. I suggest you come to our two o'clock information meeting, held right here by the pool, if you have further questions...."

Take a meeting? I wondered. On holiday?

Ron then led us what felt like several miles through grim, concrete-block



housing painted in gay colors—"Soviet Tropical"—where our rooms were located. He told us our suitcases would be dropped at an outside "depot" about fifty yards from our door. We could pick them up there, and haul them back to our room ourselves. There were no luggage carts nor much else, as I discovered, opening the door to a meanly furnished room with sagging beds. "No televisions, no phones, and no newspapers," our welcome brochure cheerfully informed us. There was also no room service of any kind, and all meals were to be eaten collectively in the main dining hall. Hotel staff would also eat with the guests, the brochure explained, to underscore the egalitarian spirit of Club Med. The club's founder was a socialist Belgian who believed that humanity could be made equal if everyone dressed in "a bathing suit and beads." (Oh, if only that were true, I thought—adolescence would be so pleasant.) "My God," I muttered to my husband, putting down the brochure while our kids frantically hunted for the TV. "This is really Club *Red*."

And indeed it was. At a time when even Cuban hotels pathetically mimic Hiltons, Club Med resorts may be the last outlets where the sentimental may experience socialism. Socialism, that is, as envisioned by a Frenchman. Good coffee, good cheese, bad plumbing (salt water showers, no baths—try that on a two-year-old) and a truly backward phone system (if you were desperate to make a call, you could go to their phone office—except of course when the operator took her morning break, lunch break, afternoon break, or closed for the day at 3:00 P.M.)

On our first morning, we tried to make the best of it. We dumped our hapless children in the Club Med equivalent of a Young Pioneer program, played a round of tennis, and then picked up the kids for lunch. Our little son rushed to my legs and clung to them, wailing. As we walked to the dining hall, rock music blaring from loudspeakers above us, I realized this had been true all morning—everywhere we went, something was being shouted or blasted at us, either from speakers or megaphones.

For meals, there was no choice but to go to the huge central cafeteria, built of concrete and glass, lit with fluorescent lights and clattering with the noise of five hundred trays and sets of cutlery; yelling children darted around the buffet tables like tropical flies. The food itself reminded me of the trips I'd made as a reporter to communist

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countries before the revolutions of 1989: scrawny backs and wings of chicken resting in pools of fat, curling filets of fish hardened at the edges, dried out mounds of rice and beans, plates of wilted tomatoes, and vinegar-soaked salads.

All the tables seated eight, and the brochure strongly urged us to sit with other guests in order to enter fully into the spirit of Club Med. Just as you were not permitted to sunbathe without a fitness instructor leading an exercise class at full volume a few feet away, nor were you to expect any peace while eating. There were no waiters, either. So once you'd used your children as marking stones for chairs, you ventured to another section of the hall to load up your tray (one trip for the kids, another for us, and still another for drinks unless you wanted to drink the unsaleable wine Club Med graciously put out for "free"). When you returned to the table, you discovered that you got to share it with a family of total strangers and their children. ("Hi, I'm Bob and this is my wife, Jill. And this cryin' one here is Little Bob. How y'all doin'?") I'm sure they were very nice people, but my husband, now thoroughly cranky, first batted them away with excuses—"Our children have contagious hives"—and then, when that didn't work ("Our kids have those too!"), no excuse except, "If you don't mind, we'd rather eat by ourselves." (Hurt, insulted looks.)

On our second day, the weather turned bad and stayed that way for the next five days. The wind kicked up, blowing sand sideways down the beach. Our children refused to return to the programs (where, by the way, the staff were playing them the videos that had been barred from the guest rooms); our two-year-old began screaming whenever we neared the little day-care cottage like a Vietnam veteran having a flashback. We were trapped. There was nowhere quiet to sit and read except for the smelly, uncomfortable rooms. When the wind calmed down a bit, we tried sitting next to the frigidly cold pool until some happy Club Med staff member brought out his megaphone again and announced it was time to lead everyone in another communal "sun dance." If you went to the front

desk to ask for information—such as, "Where can I get a bus to somewhere else on the island?"—the staff member would glower and ask accusingly, "Didn't you attend our information meeting?"

The kids started fighting like cats, and my husband and I began to behave like dissidents. I caught him refusing to divulge his first name to the day-care workers so they'd have to call him "Mr." instead of "Dave." I began avoiding all contact with other guests, even the most informal kind—such as mothers' chat by the swings—out of fear it would lead to an invitation to eat together. And here was a very rich irony: By so aggressively forcing people together, Club Med's policy had the opposite effect, at least on people like me who prefer—and even delight in—making acquaintances by chance.

Finally we found a little restaurant in the island's one tiny town. The fish was fresh and the waitress, to our immense pleasure, loathed Club Med. "You escaped, did you?" a man called out from the bar. The waitress told us she had worked there a few years back and was unimpressed with its vision of "Life As It Should Be," as its advertising slogan goes. For her—and the other residents on the island—it translates into: No Tips for Locals. Don't be fooled, she said, by the club's superficial egalitarianism. The black, Bahamian housekeepers, busboys, and cooks are not allowed to sit with the guests like the white staff are (true).

As we walked back from town, I noticed a huge satellite dish at the far end of the resort—no doubt bringing CNN and HBO to the French commandant and his favored staff. They probably also get the daily *Miami Herald* and direct phone service, I thought sourly.

When at last we returned to Canada, the wind suddenly didn't seem so bad. "Look kids! Snow!" We'd missed another plane in Miami, our luggage had gotten lost again, and, of course, our daughter came down with an ear infection.

The children fell on the television the instant we got in the door, and I stood peacefully in the kitchen, drinking a lovely glass of tap water without anyone trying to introduce themselves.

Several years have passed, and we haven't dared to take another winter vacation. It doesn't matter. Now we live in Washington, a place God inexplicably favors. For a week the temperature this January hovered near seventy, and no one—not even Al Gore—uttered a complaint about global warming. I sat outside in the garden, having hauled a deck chair from the garage, sighed pleasantly and wondered what the poor bastards were up to at Club Med. ◆

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"Aren't You Forgetting Something, Dear?"

Jo Anne M. Randall remembers her Aunt Roz

When Aunt Roz died, the news came to me third hand and from far away St. Louis. She was ninety-five years old, although she insisted she was only ninety-four, and she had what is known as a very good life. That means that she had a husband and children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and plenty of money to keep things running smoothly.

Whenever Aunt Roz came to town, at first by train and then by those old DC-6 propeller planes and still later by jets, it always seemed like Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve rolled into one. She was as magical as the Good Witch Glinda from the Wizard of Oz, floating down on us from inside an iridescent bubble, scattering gifts and good times. We were lucky because she almost always stayed at our house.

She and my Uncle Dave were to me as glamorous as movie stars or royalty. Wherever they went life was livelier and the colors more intense. They took us to real Chinese restaurants way down in Chinatown, restaurants where our family sat at a large round table in a private room that was partitioned off with painted bamboo screens. Uncle Dave played "St. Louie Woman" on the juke box and rolled his eyes and gestured and looked at Aunt Roz as if she were the Queen of Sheba. One time as I walked behind them down a hallway, I saw Uncle Dave pinch Aunt Roz on her bottom. She smacked his hand and said "Dave!" to him in a voice that only pretended to be annoyed.

My mother made sure linen napkins were used even in our kitchen when Aunt Roz was with us, though they seldom appeared in the dining room except for occasions or very special company. And though our desserts were rarely more exciting than canned peaches or jello, when Aunt Roz visited the freezer compartment of the ice box, as we then called it, held two hand-packed quarts of her favorite ice cream, "Peppermint Stick." Pale pink with red and green candies, it was purchased especially for the occasion from the local confectionery. I have never eaten or even seen it since.

Aunt Roz was the only woman I knew who still wore hats. She also used sterling silver flatware every day, and believed in beauty shops and cleaning women and in tipping anyone who performed a service.

She was privy to myriad secrets whose very existence we had never imagined. Hers was a world of corsets and corsages and of cuticles that had to be trained. Aunt Roz always knew what a lady did or did not do. She understood that certain things were never said and never done while others were mandatory. You always expressed appreciation, preferably in writing, for even the smallest kindness. And you never, never made a fuss. She was charitable toward surly saleswomen, reminding us that they might have a sick husband at home or perhaps very painful bunions.

In this way, grace was a word that had as much meaning for Aunt Roz as it did for the ancients. To live in this world with a measure of grace was tantamount to taking seriously God's admonition to be holy. Be holy, God admonished, for I the Lord your God am holy. Aunt Roz understood that

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this meant, among other things, never be late, wear nice underwear, and lay your table properly.

She was the only person I ever knew who consistently wrote thank-you notes for the thank-you notes you sent her. She always had beautifully monogrammed stationery on heavy stock, but she had no interest in spelling. Her perfectly adequate public school education had never convinced her that it was a skill worth mastering. So she developed the habit (even before arthritis crippled her writing hand) of allowing her words to trail off into a line of scribbly, blue-black ink as soon as the initial consonants were in place. You could always decipher her letters though, knowing as you read them that they were gracious acts lovingly laced with words like *adorable* and *exquisite* and *delicious*. When she made long-distance phone calls to congratulate a person on a birthday or anniversary she spoke in a breathless and hurried voice, because for her long distance remained an extravagant event meant to mark an occasion rather than further a relationship. Such calls were the telephone equivalent of a telegram and presented themselves smartly and in uniform like the Philip Morris lad.

During one visit with us, Aunt Roz was seated in the living room when a young man pulled up in our driveway and honked his horn to let me know it was time to go bowling. I was wearing a pair of yellow culottes and was bare-legged. As I passed her on the way to the front door, Aunt Roz took off her reading glasses. "Aren't you forgetting something, dear?" she asked. I froze in my tracks as I tried to determine which of my many infringements qualified as "something." Aunt Roz was never one to allow a person to twist in the wind, however, so she rescued me as I stood there mute and paralyzed. "Your gloves, my dear," she gently reminded me. "A lady never goes out without her gloves."

It makes no sense to say that I will miss her. I will no more miss her than I miss certain cities I have visited or sunsets I have seen. I may miss certain ritual acts like my annual birthday card to her or my thank-you notes for those exotic gifts she sometimes sent from Gump's or Williams-Sonoma (before it became everybody's favorite kitchen-gadget store). My children have grown up assuming that any utterly decorative or purely impractical item—our silver-plated butter curler, our set of eight artichoke plates—came from Aunt Roz. They are usually right.

IT DOES NOT seem possible that the twenty-first century will have much room in it for women like Aunt Roz. A lady to the end, she never even thought of hurrying the Almighty, despite years and years of arthritic pain. But six weeks before she finally left this world she did ask, "Do you think that God forgot me?" She offered no criticism, however, but waited patiently with hands folded and ankles neatly crossed for the oversight to be corrected. ◆

Jo Anne M. Randall is a writer and clinical psychologist in Cleveland, Ohio.

Feminist Lap Dogs

WHEN MITSUBISHI WAS hit with sexual harassment lawsuits, Patricia Ireland warned its executives, "We're going to be watchdogs—not lap dogs—of the company to make sure that reality lives up to rhetoric for those women." When it comes to Monica Lewinsky, however, she is acting awfully like Bill Clinton's Labrador, Buddy.

The National Organization for Women has been silent on the scandal, saying only it is "unable to comment responsibly." This silence is in stark contrast to feminists' previous outrage over the behavior of prominent men. When Senator Bob Packwood was forced to resign over sexual harassment of his female staff, Patricia Ireland said, "They [the senators] understand that their constituents will no longer tolerate the abuse of power or the abuse of women by those in power." When Anita Hill claimed that Clarence Thomas had made smutty remarks to her, female legislators—including Maxine Waters, Barbara Boxer, and Eleanor Holmes Norton—marched from the House to the Senate to protest his nomination to the Supreme Court.

The U.S. military now accepts the feminist reasoning that sex between a male superior and female subordinate can never truly be considered consensual, and that the very act constitutes sexual harassment. Last March, women's groups applauded when officers were sentenced to prison for consensual sex with female trainees at the Aberdeen Proving Ground training base. Prosecutor Capt. Theresa Gallagher argued, "There is no place in the military for someone whose selfish sexual desires, his lust, comes above the needs of his country and the defense of its sons and daughters."

But what feminists expect of an officer, they do not expect of the Commander-in-Chief. ◆

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Correspondence

Sex, as editors know, always gets a rise—perhaps especially if you're against it (or at least, against the wrong sort). Our readers' reaction to our special forty-page "sex issue" ("Let's Face It Girls, the Sexual Revolution Was a Mistake," Autumn 1997) could not have been more passionate and enthusiastic than if we'd run a naked Pamela Anderson Lee on our cover. Michael Medved read excerpts from the issue on his radio show and for the next two hours was swamped with calls. Welcome to all of you Medvedites who join us as new subscribers.

Of course, not everyone was thrilled with our take on sex. We suspected that men might be less than pleased with our call for an end to free sex. But clearly we underestimated how many of our male readers have daughters and wives, and also how many of them simply aren't cads. Alas, there was one notable exception: Peter Carlson, the magazine columnist for the Washington Post, *wrote that he enjoyed our male contributors but was put off by the women. Perhaps he thought we were out to spoil his fun (we were).*

Keep sending those letters, faxes, and e-mails. Mail correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, The Women's Quarterly, *2111 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3057. Fax: 703/243-9230. E-mail: iwf@iwf.org. You can also stop by our website: www.iwf.org.*

We hope to bring back gloves, too

As my four-year-old daughter colored the cover of your Autumn 1997 issue, giving the sultry woman purple tights and red eyes, I decided that instead of letting her read tripe like *Our Bodies, Our Selves* when she's older, I'll have her read your sex issue and learn what she really needs to know:

• That her mom wasn't a flake for marrying early and bearing children while only in her late twenties (thanks Lisa Schiffren!). That true power comes from sexual restraint. And those that aren't restrained serve only to take jobs away from prostitutes (thanks F. Carolyn Graglia!).

• That it's OK, and even necessary, to openly judge adulterers as wrong (thanks Melinda Ledden Sidak!).

• That conservative women really are sexier (sorry David Brooks!) and that dating really should be an elaborate, complex ritual—the more hoops (rather than beds) the man has to jump through, the better (sorry Jonathan Foreman, thanks Olivia Vlahos!).

• That *The Women's Quarterly* contains more substance and humor in one issue than *Cosmopolitan* will ever contain in all its volumes put together (sorry Helen Gurley Brown!).

ANITA ASHLAND
Madison, Wisconsin

We'll need it

Early marriage is the solution proposed by Lisa Schiffren ("Is That All There Is?"). Now, marrying early is a fine idea, but it requires an accommodating social milieu. When I left high school thirty-five years ago, relatively few of us went directly to college. Many of us, especially the girls, married soon after graduation. Why the "early" marriages? Of course there is no single explanation: That was a different world. But surely a prime motive was the prospect of "conjugal bliss," something not then dependably available without benefit of clergy to respectable people—and certainly not to nice girls.

Young people now enter into "conjugal bliss" on the first date—society's interest being limited to public health and plumbing management. Schiffren would have us believe that our children will eagerly abandon this saturnalian Eden—into which we, their elders, have neglectfully dumped them. Good luck!

GEORGE G. PEERY III
Annandale, Virginia

A literary chastity belt

I loved your last issue! I'm saving it for my daughters when they are older, and I will make it required reading. It was nice to finally see a woman's magazine that *completely* supports me in my choices (*i.e.*, monogamy, mid-twenties marriage, and children before thirty).

JENNIFER REGAN
(via e-mail)

Safe sex is not good sex

I thoroughly enjoyed your last issue—almost thoroughly, anyway. To wit: Why the hand-wringing over the few birth control options available to American women ("The Female Condom and Other Bright Ideas," by Marc M. Arkin)? I'm for tort reform as much as any other red-blooded member of the Federalist Society, but let's pick our battles. I don't regret the lack of an ever-widening array of contraceptives, and neither should anyone else who agrees that the sexual revolution has failed American women.

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After all, didn't the birth control pill help get us into this mess in the first place? Widespread access to reliable contraception enabled men and women to convince themselves that they could have sex without consequences. The result: a remarkably swift breakdown of social convention and traditional morality, followed by the attendant social problems so well-described in other parts of your issue. Our culture now cheapens sex and short-changes children, and we're kidding ourselves to think that the complete social acceptance of artificial contraception has nothing to do with this.

In the wake of the sexual revolution, the provocative question is not whether American women should want more options for birth control, but whether they should want birth control at all.

KIM DANIELS
San Francisco, California

Right-wing women annoyingly point out your little foibles

I FORGIVE DAVID Brooks his ignorance ("The Token Man" debate, Autumn 1997) since it sounds like he hasn't been out with a woman other than his wife—or in fact out at all—since 1962, but "having to mind your manners" and "cigar breath" as the perils of dating other-than-liberal women?! The only women who smoke cigars anymore are deluded PR reps or secretaries from Jersey who think it shows they're trendy (maybe this isn't the case in that dreary swamp called D.C. where there is nothing else to do). Was Maggie Thatcher the only right-wing woman he could think of (since he hasn't been out since 1962)? And Naomi Wolf for the left? Hello!

I suppose who Brooks was really railing about were wonks—and, I agree, wonks of either sex are decidedly not sexy. So read their scholarly articles and don't date them—and maybe, like, get out a little more!

STEPHANIE GUTMANN
New York, New York

Or maybe "Smart Women, Foolish Choices?"

WHAT A SMORGASBOARD of food for thought the autumn issue was! I enjoyed everything in it, from the men being men to the women being ladies. As so often happens with your writers, Lisa Schiffren wrote about something that had been rattling around in my head for some time now. The lack of an honest appraisal of the relations between men and women was certainly damaging to me as I was growing up. And I think my mother tried to be honest with me in a way that few mothers did. But I managed to muddle through that period because I learned the lesson it was designed to teach. No matter what I tell myself over a pint of Haagen-Dazs, or what my friends tell me, or most important what any man may say in the heat of whatever, the bottom line is this: It's my life and I am responsible for everything that happens in it. I believe that was the original *raison d'être* of the feminist movement. At some point, the leaders of the women's movement lost sight of the fact that if we make the choices we must accept the consequences.

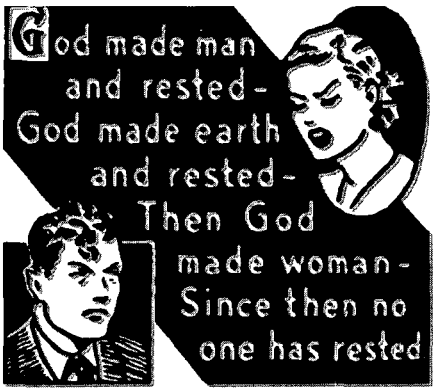
But what a revelation was Noemie Emery's analysis of the feminists and Paula Jones ("The Real Reason Feminists Won't Defend Paula Jones"). The First Lady has, it appears, spent her life making choices and then avoiding (or trying to avoid by all means necessary) the consequences. If she were my friend, a copy of Dr. Laura's *Ten Stupid Things Women Do* would be on its way to her.

CYNTHIA NEIL
Woodbridge, Virginia

Williams-Sonoma would make it perfect

WHAT A GREAT issue! The autumn *TWQ* arrived in the mail along with my latest *Victoria's Secret* catalogue full of frippery to make women sexually appealing to men. The human race may yet survive.

BETSY DORMINEY
Athens, Georgia



You need a better come-on

I JUST READ the fall issue, and recalled a cartoon you ran about a middle-aged woman screaming that she can't connect with men because of feminism (Marka Lazar, Summer 1997). As a senior baby boomer who has supped full with the horrors of that movement's excesses, I sense that anger is still the leitmotif. Now they're mad because they can't find a man. I've taken up introducing myself as a Keynesian feminist: "I hold that the supply for angry women vastly exceeds the demand."

It is interesting, though, looking at the

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wreckage that litters the landscape, listening to the latest wave of complaints, and thinking, "No longer my problem." I suspect a few million other guys feel the same.

PHILIP GOLD
Seattle, Washington

Refuse to eat peas

THE MOST RECENT number of TWQ shows the good and the bad sides of contemporary liberalism. Christopher Hitchens' article ("The Token Man" debate) about being spanked by Lady Thatcher was charming and funny.

Noemie Emery, on the other hand, shows the unacceptable face of liberalism is that of our First Lady. Feminists are right when they contend that Hillary Clinton should be critiqued because of her ideas, not because of Paula Jones or what Hillary did or did not do with Vince Foster (who, at last report, was still dead). The problem with Hillary Clinton is that her ideas are all bad. She is an eat-your-peas, nails-on-the-blackboard liberal. She is a firm believer in the nanny state, and wants to be Nanny-in-Chief.

William F. Buckley once found out that Eleanor Roosevelt would never cross a picket line and vowed to find people who would permanently picket Eleanor's house. Who are the brave souls who will perform a similar task with Hillary Clinton?

MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
Silver Spring, Maryland

Sorry, ladies, he's taken

TERRIFIC AUTUMN EDITION! An awful lot of good sense in here. Incredible that it almost seems audacious for it to be said.

THEODORE B. OLSON
Washington, D.C.

Never give up on femininity

I, TOO, HAVE been on a quest for a reasonably comfortable and attractive (I gave up on "feminine") pair of shoes, and agree with Danielle Crittenden's Diary ("Low Style," Autumn 1997) about the prevalence of the "battered lesbian" look. I see young women walking around the city every day with this "look" in addition to mad-at-the-world facial expressions. I guess for now we'll have to hobble along on our clunky shoes and hope for better days (and fashion designers).

I FEEL PRETTY IN PHILLY
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Let's start by saying thank you when a man opens a door

FINALLY FRESH AIR! I just read my first sample issue of your publication. I feel like I've spent my life struggling against sterile, shallow, and inhuman feminist dogma, and now in the IWF I've found my philosophical compatriots.

There is no time to lose. Let's crush stale, boring, intellectually suffocating feminism wherever it rears its ugly head. Please let's do this in our lifetimes, so we don't have to suffer any more affronts to our intelligence and femininity. I propose "Ladies Clubs," complete with teas, at campuses all over the United States. Perhaps we could launch a so-called "Ladyist" movement, and the ideology of "ladyism" will become the new *modus operandi* that every good woman will soon embrace. Thank you for the oxygen!

NADIA SILVERSHINE
Kentfield, California

Are YOU taken?

A FRIEND GAVE me a copy of your Autumn issue—I took it home with me after work, began reading it, and didn't put it down until I finished. Congratulations on a superb magazine and a wonderful issue. I cannot remember the last time I more strongly agreed with a collected group of writers.

The Women's Quarterly should be must reading in every household in America. If it were, I think you'd see a quick return to a more civilized—and fun—society. I wish you the best of success in all your future endeavors—and thank you for providing this thirty-three-year-old man with his new favorite magazine.

M. JOHN GRIMLEY
San Francisco, California

We thought sustainable communities required sex

LORRAINE WATKINS' LETTER ("Correspondence," Autumn 1997) expresses my sentiments as to why I will not renew my IWF membership. I am not impressed with the drivel of celebrity journalist Christopher Hitchens and wish you would get your brains from between your (or rather our) legs with constant articles on sex as recreation.

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The real issues are child care, overpopulation, moving women into legislatures and Congress, sustainable communities, water resources, world economics, and how we will compete for jobs.

PATRICIA GRIFFITHS
Ocklawaha, Florida

Risk of breast cancer from abortion is higher than stated

CANDACE CRANDALL'S MISTAKEN appraisal ("None of Our Business?" Summer 1997) of the abortion-breast cancer link (ABC link) follows from three fundamental errors.

First, she confuses the technical epidemiological meaning of the term "weak" with its very different, common-usage meaning, to imply that the connection is tenuous. In fact, the ABC link, as an overall weak (technical term here) association, is of relatively low magnitude, in the range of twenty to fifty percent.

Second, since scientists span a wide spectrum of opinion concerning the ABC link, Crandall concludes that, "there are still no definitive answers." This unscientific conclusion contradicts the published scientific record. As a matter of fact, since 1957, twenty-four of the thirty studies published worldwide on the ABC link show increased risk. Moreover, this overwhelming preponderance of data is supported by the underlying biology, as even Crandall acknowledges.

But inexplicably, Crandall places me "at one end of the spectrum," never mentioning my collaborative, comprehensive review and meta-analysis of the ABC link in the British Medical Association's *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (October 1996). "Meta-analysis" means we compiled the data of all the studies to obtain a quantitative overall estimate (thirty percent increased risk). The biostatistician of our group—who actually compiled the data—is Vernon Chinchilli, chief of biostatistics at the Pennsylvania State Medical College. Chinchilli himself is "pro-choice," as is epidemiologist Janet Daling, whom Crandall cites extensively, and who has publicly called our meta-analysis "very objective and statistically beyond reproach" in the *Wall Street Journal.* Crandall even got some of her facts wrong: 1) Daling's 1996 study showed a twenty percent—not a ninety percent—increased risk, and 2) the 1997 Danish study did not "likely misclassif(y) tens of thousands of women with breast cancer as having had no abortions." The correct fact is that tens of thousands of women who'd had legal abortions on record were misclassified as having had no abortions.

Crandall's third fundamental error is embodied in the statement: "Those of us who follow the degradation of science tend to take a cynical view of new research results, particularly those announced with great fanfare at press conferences." The statement is ironic because it is cynicism that degrades science. Abortion would have long ago been on everyone's list of risk factors for breast cancer were it not for political pressure to preserve the reputation as safer for women than childbirth. It isn't. And precisely because it is a matter of choice, and because a single abortion makes a measurable difference, abortion is the most avoidable risk factor for breast cancer. Don't women have a right to know that?

JOEL BRIND, Ph.D.
Professor of Human Biology
and Endocrinology,
Baruch College,
The City University of New York
New York, New York

Candace Crandall responds:

DR. BRIND IS incorrect. Relative risks are termed "weak" associations not because their magnitude is comparatively low but because the association is highly uncertain. How uncertain is Brind's thirty percent increased risk? It's in the same ballpark as studies that claim an association between breast cancer and the consumption of olive oil (twenty-five percent), birth weight in women of more than eight pounds (thirty percent), or a weight gain of more than forty pounds after age eighteen (forty percent). By contrast, a woman who smokes cigarettes increases her risk of lung cancer by some two thousand percent—a strong correlation.

Regarding Dr. Brind's much-touted meta-analysis, combining studies is a statistical technique, not a scientific one, and should only be used where the quality of each study is high. That was not the case here. Weak associations are weak associations; twenty-four weak associations are as unreliable as one weak association.

As to his last point, skepticism is part of the scientific method and encourages credible research. It is the rush to propel inconclusive results into national and international health crises that degrades science—and there has been all too much of that in recent years. Studies of abortion and breast cancer show intriguing and statistically stronger results among small populations of certain subgroubs, and these warrant further study. For such women I did not dismiss a possible link, but advised caution until better data was available. That is still my view. ◆

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One last observation . . .

Still Crazy After All These Years

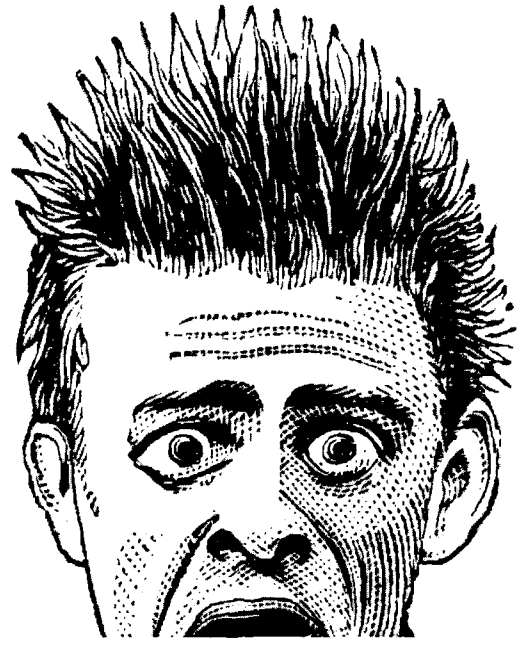
Dale O'Leary unearths Ruth Bader Ginsburg's youthful ramblings

Long before Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg attempted to do away with male military colleges, she hoped to banish such sexist terms as "husband" and "wife," and even "grandfather" and "grandmother."

Twenty years ago, Ginsburg—then a professor at Columbia Law School—and Brenda Feigen-Fasteau, former director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, were asked to suggest ways to remove "sex bias from our most basic laws."

Their report, "Sex Bias in the U.S. Code," published by the Commission on Civil Rights in 1977, took exception to the number of laws that referred to "husbands and wives" rather than "spouses"; "fathers and mothers" rather than "parents"; "grandfathers and grandmothers" rather than "grandparents"; "sisters and brothers" rather than "siblings"; and "stepsisters and stepbrothers" rather than "stepsiblings."

The report also expressed concern that the anti-litter symbol of the time, a character named Johnny Horizon, was a "sex stereotype of the outdoorsperson" and "should be supplemented with a female figure promoting the same values." "The two figures," it said, "should be depicted as persons of equal strength of character."



The report went on to criticize a section of the U.S. Code which deals with marriages contracted according to Indian customs because, among other reasons, it "contains unnecessary references to the sexes of the parties to the marriage."

And the report objected to government support for such flagrantly sexist organizations as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. These groups, it warned, "while ostensibly providing 'separate but equal' benefits to both sexes perpetuate stereotyped sex roles."

However, Ginsburg and Feigen-Fasteau wrote that they *would* allow the continued use of sex-specific place names such as Twin Sisters Mountain and Minute Man National Park.

That's good news for the people of Boise, Idaho. ◆

Dale O'Leary is author of The Gender Agenda: Redefining Equality *(Vital Issues Press: 1997), from which this item is adapted. To order a copy, call 800/299-2688.*

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FOR THE PAST five years, the Independent Women's Forum has been taking on the old establishment of feminist organizations—and winning. "The IWF has a profile almost unheard of for a group that is the new kid on the block," writes the *Boston Globe*. "In the marketplace of ideas, from the national news media all the way down to local radio, the IWF has shown its real strength....[The] IWF is well on its way to becoming the foremost media nemesis of the feminist movement."

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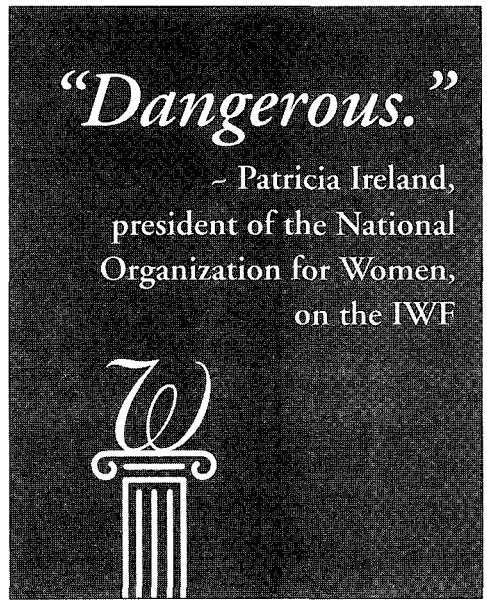

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